



# SAN YSIDRO SCHOOL DISTRICT

Quality education and opportunity for  
all students to succeed

## Press Release

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## San Ysidro School's 'Language in Play' Program Begins 2016 Semester at District Schools

**SAN YSIDRO** – A creative after-school program that improves the language and literacy skills of bilingual students began its second semester at all seven San Ysidro School District campuses Jan. 25 and 26.

Language in Play, launched in October 2015, taught students during its first semester how to work through nervousness using breathing and motion techniques and to find new ways to express themselves.

"I love Language in Play because we are always learning how to do things in a totally unexpected and different way," said Romy Haydee Martinez, 13, an eighth-grader at San Ysidro Middle School. "We are learning how to communicate with one another and how to speak with confidence. Every time I leave a Language in Play session, I feel energized."

Students met with theater professionals bi-weekly for eight weeks, practicing improvisational exercises that engaged different parts of the body and brain through physical movement. Students demonstrated the techniques during a series of performances held before winter break.

"The Language in Play program provides a supportive outlet for artistic expression while challenging our students to continue to develop language and literacy skills," SYSD Board President Marcos Diaz said. "This program represents an alternate pathway of learning that encourages students to connect with themselves and one another in a unique way."

Language in Play was developed by Hollywood actor Tony Plana in partnership with the East L.A. Classic Theatre. Since its inception in 1997, Language in Play has been integrated into multiple schools in California and New York to help students build self-confidence, communicate effectively and push beyond their comfort zones to develop leadership skills.

"It is truly amazing to see how much our students have accomplished in such a short amount of time," SYSD Superintendent Dr. Julio Fonseca said. "Language in Play is a program that reflects the high priority our District is placing on the development of visual and performing arts programs to support student learning and success. We hope students continue to thrive in the Language in Play program this semester."

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### PHOTO CAPTIONS:

**LANGUAGE1:** During a series of performances held before winter break, students demonstrate the techniques they learned from the creative after-school program Language in Play, which applies theater arts techniques to improve language, communication and behavior skills while also boosting self-confidence.



**LANGUAGE2:** Students from San Ysidro Middle School's Language in Play program meet with theater professionals twice a week to practice a variety of improvisational exercises that stimulate different parts of the body and brain through movement.